

RICHESON PAYS EXTREME PENALTY

(Continued from First Page)

knowledge of its having been sent, the attorney declared. He added that he had every reason to believe that the condemned man had no expectation of any such means of death.

History of His Crime.

The course of justice, while undoubtedly accelerated by Richeson's confession, which followed close upon his attempt at suicide in the Charles Street Jail, was unusually swift. Avis Linnell died in the Young Women's Christian Association home in Boston on Saturday night, October 13 last. While a permit for the burial of her body was being issued the following morning, Richeson was preaching from the pulpit of his Baptist church in Cambridge. The following Sunday, at the customary hour for divine worship, Richeson sat, an accused murderer, in the Charles Street Jail.

It is also a coincidence worthy of mention that two weeks later, on the exact date which had been set for his wedding to the Brookline heiress, Richeson, with head erect and defiant eyes, pleaded not guilty when arraigned on the formal charge of murder. All told, but a day or two more than seven months elapsed between Avis Linnell's death and the death of the man who encompassed her end.

Each development of this tragedy followed so closely upon the other as to be almost bewildering. Avis Linnell's death came so late upon the fatal Saturday night that it did not find its way into the columns of the Boston newspapers until Monday morning. Then appeared in all of them a short news paragraph under the caption, "Girl is a Suicide at W. V. C. A. Home." The article contained merely a series of commonplace sentences, with not one word to indicate the dramatic events yet fated to be unfolded. It set forth merely that Avis Linnell, nineteen years old, formerly a choir singer in the Baptist Church at Hyannis, and now a student of vocal music in the New England Conservatory, had died from the effects of cyanide of potassium under circumstances which dictated almost beyond argument that it was a case of suicide.

The girl had been found in the bathroom on the dormitory floor of the Young Women's Christian Association home, where she lived. Attention had been called to her condition by fellow lodgers, who heard her sobbing means coming from the bathroom. They found her seated upon a chair, with her feet in the bathtub. No bottle or papers which had contained poison, in either liquid or powder form, were to be found. The only articles observed in the bathroom were three pieces of fresh laundered underclothing. This underwear, in truly a remarkable way, started the process of retribution. It came about in this way:

First Meets Her Murderer.

Avis Linnell, when barely more than sixteen years old, met Richeson for the first time when he officiated at the marriage of her sister in Hyannis, where Richeson was the pastor of the village Baptist church, before he was called to the more pretentious pulpit in Cambridge.

Richeson's attentions to Avis began from that time, much to the concealed distaste of the young man who had become her brother-in-law. He has since the tragedy admitted that his dislike for the pastor was instinctive from the first, but that he was obliged to conceal it and that he refrained from expressing his opposition to the little girl receiving visits from the pastor because he had heard nothing special about which to base his objections. This brother-in-law, now an employee in one of the Brockton shoe factories, set out from his home to Boston upon being apprised of the tragedy to claim the body and superintend its transportation to the family residence in Hyannis.

His errand to Boston literally was a double one of trouble. Directly he arrived at the W. V. C. A. home he made public all the facts of Richeson's friendship for Avis Linnell, and the fact of an existing engagement of marriage. This disclosure, in the opinion of the young women living in the home, revealed that the friendship between Richeson and the dead girl was a matter of common information in the home, and she related how Richeson had been called on the telephone about 11:30 o'clock on the night of the girl's death. The person who answered to the name of Richeson in the other end of the wire appeared most indifferent to the startling news imparted to him. Yes, he said, he knew Miss Linnell; had known her and her family down in Hyannis when he had a church there. He was very sorry to hear of the deed, but really he couldn't see how he could be of any service just then, and didn't understand why

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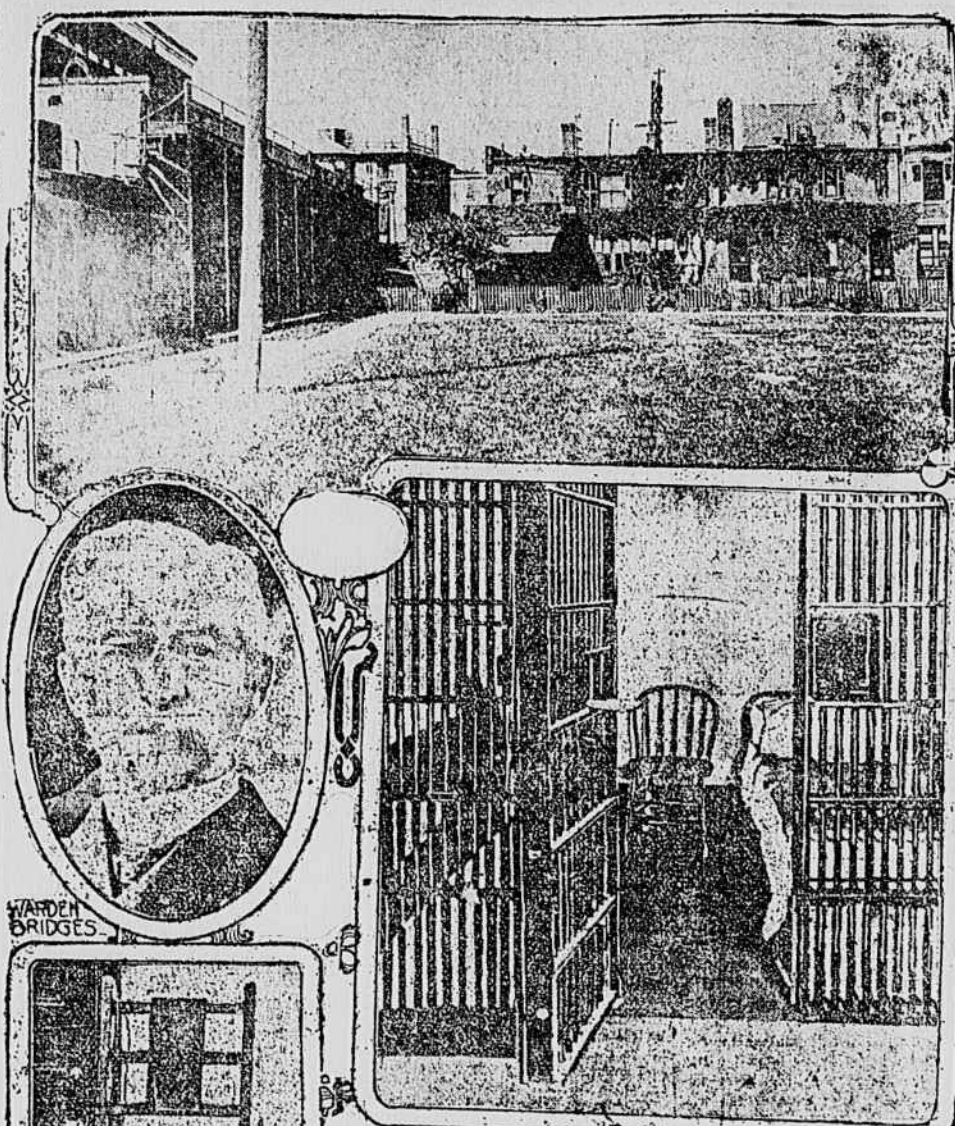
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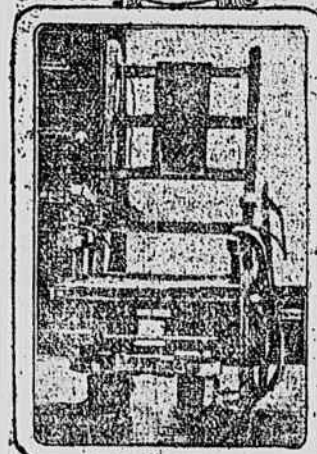
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PRISON WARDEN, DEATH HOUSE AND CELL OF FORMER PREACHER



WARDEN BRIDGES



DEATH CHAIR IN CHARLESTON PRISON

CELL IN DEATH HOUSE OCCUPIED BY RICHESON

story of her condence in the man who had received her into the church.

So much for the clue afforded by the clear clothes. Events were fast becoming intolerable for the Rev. Mr. Richeson. He fled from his lodgings in Cambridge. He went direct to the home of his prospective father-in-law, Moses Grant Edmunds, of Brookline. Mr. Edmunds lives in the Chestnut Hill section of Brookline, not a great distance from the home of the late Mrs. Eddy, a section of Boston's richest suburb, containing residences situated deep within wooded estates, and altogether an ideal spot for seclusion.

Richeson, with a fine counterfeit of candor, told Mr. Edmunds that he was being hounded by the newspapers merely because he had known a girl who unfortunately had just committed suicide. He said the reporters were tagging his name into the case; that they knew of his approaching marriage, and that they were attempting to involve the Edmunds family in the sensation. Mr. Edmunds at once offered the preacher, already a fugitive, a haven in his own home. Thus it happened that when it had been determined to arrest Richeson, he was taken from under the roof which sheltered his fiancée. Under circumstances, which by the way, may be easily understood, when the actual arrest was finally made, Mr. Edmunds accompanied Richeson to the jail. He visited the accused man several times pending arraignment, a fact which was responsible for a widely circulated report that the belief of the Edmunds family in the innocence of Richeson, wealth and influence would be spared in supplying the best legal authority to defend him.

However, as the case wore on and the circumstantial evidence began to pile up against the accused, Mr. Edmunds's visits grew less frequent, and finally ceased entirely.

The actual arrest of Richeson was accomplished by a Cambridge constable. The evidence against him was purely circumstantial; no one had appeared to demand formally a warrant for his arrest; the accused man was not a fugitive in such strict sense that he had been taken on suspicion, and further, he was a resident of Norfolk county, outside the city of Boston and the jurisdiction of the Suffolk county authorities.

House Is Surrounded.

Efforts of the Boston police to interview Richeson in the Edmunds home were unavailing. No station was paid to calls over the telephone, and no one was admitted to the house. It was then that Chief Wards, of Boston, decided upon a course unofficial, but effective. Driving out to Brookline one biting cold midnight, he threw a solid wall of bluecoated men around the Edmunds home. When the household awoke the next morning the only thing visible from any window in the building was a policeman. The constable began to tell, and at the instance of Mr. Edmunds, Richeson sent for the chief and announced that he was quite willing to surrender himself, inasmuch as all this excitement was being caused, and that had he known in the first place that such a sensation was to be made over nothing he would have surrendered at once.

It was with this defiant manner that Richeson allowed himself to be taken to prison, and a few days later entered his plea of "not guilty" upon arraignment.

It is a question, according to the Boston lawyers who have followed the case, that had Richeson's remarkable nerve which asserted itself for the first two weeks after being taken into custody, only stuck to him, whether the Commonwealth could have won a conviction. The best legal defense available was engaged for the accused

man. Added to the ability of William A. Morse, one of the leading criminal attorneys of Boston, was that of John L. Lee, of Lynchburg, Va., one of the most prominent criminal pleaders of the South. For advisory counsel former Judge Dunbar, of Boston, was retained. It took these three men but one short conference to understand that the weak spot in the prosecution's case was the fact that no one had seen Richeson purchase cyanide of potassium; no one had seen him give it to Avis Linnell, and, indeed, that no one could be found who had seen Richeson and Avis Linnell together for many hours before the choir singer was found dying. The defense as first mapped out was a complete denial, an alibi, and a sweeping plea of not guilty.

First Blow for Defense. But here the defense got its first body blow. A Boston newspaper made its appearance on the street one afternoon with a first page displaying an advertisement offering \$1,000 to any who would bring to the office of that newspaper information of a recent purchase of cyanide of potassium which could not be explained in compliance with the State law governing the sale of poison.

Out in Newton Centre, another of the many suburbs of Boston, was a drug-gist named Hahn. Hahn had sold cyanide of potassium to Richeson. But the apothecary was a wise man in that he did not claim the reward with the indisputable facts in his possession. Instead, he took the details of the transaction to his attorney, who in turn lost no time in spreading the information revealed by Hahn before the district attorney and his associates.

Hahn's story in effect was that ten days before Avis Linnell died Richeson purchased a quantity of cyanide of potassium from him. He had known Richeson when the young Virginian was a divinity student in Newton, and he accepted without question Richeson's explanation that he desired the poison with which to kill a dog. Richeson had fallen ill, and as she was a pet, but become a mother, he felt the only humane thing to do was to put her out of her misery. Hahn explained that he had remained quiet for a time only in the belief that his friend Richeson would be vindicated and that he would have disclosed the poison transaction at once had he seen the drift events were taking.

The defense accepted indifference. It would be shown, it was announced with perfect equanimity, that Richeson had used the poison for the purpose he had announced, and that even the carcass of the dog would be produced

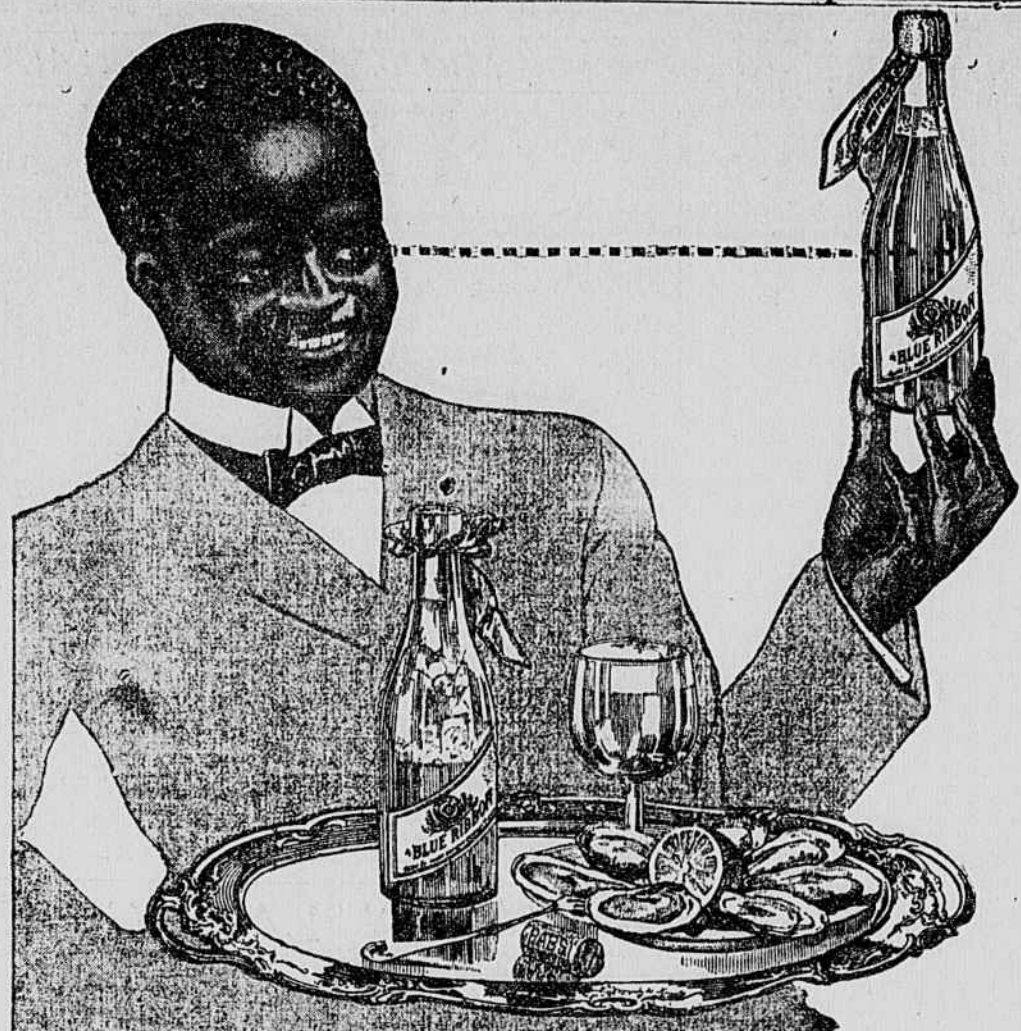
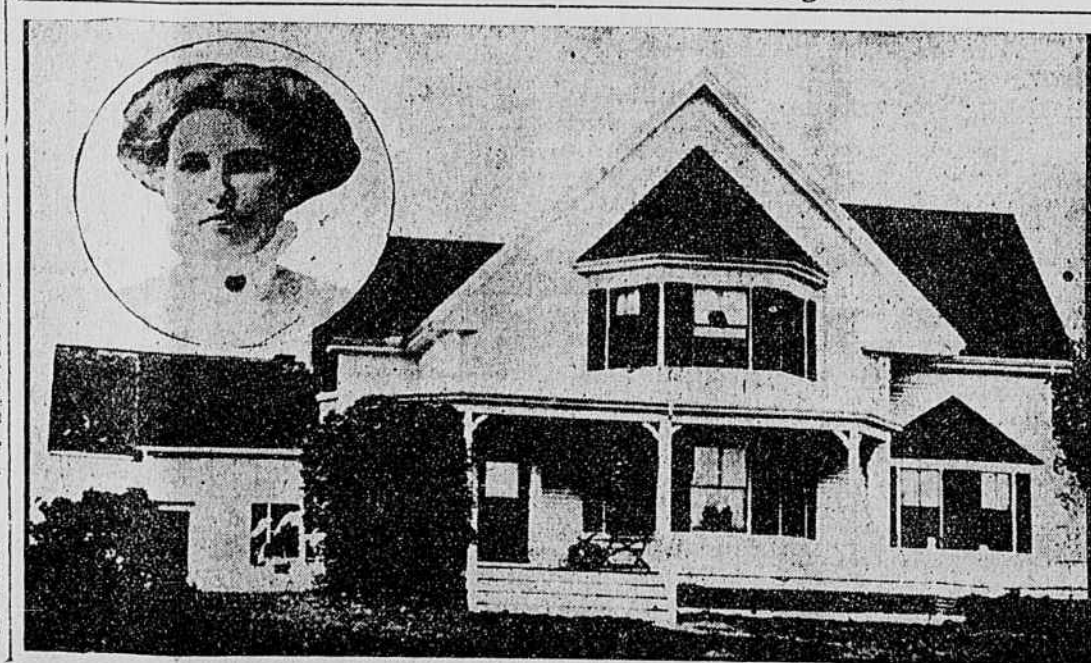
from the spot where it was buried when the proper time came.

A "Gentle" Third Degree.

Just what information the prosecution had to warrant its flat predictions that there would be but one verdict in the case perhaps will never be known, but it is known, and here stated upon excellent authority, that the prosecution set out upon a process of "sawing" the minister by the gentlest "third degree methods" known in the annals of crime. Not one attempt was made by the Commonwealth's attorney's office to catch the prisoner. Carrying the policy to an extreme, no attempt was made to converse with him about it. The subject was never mentioned. But each morning a representative from the district attorney's office went over to the Charles Street Jail and appeared casually to walk down the corridor past Richeson's cell. There was always a cheerful "Good morning, Mr. Richeson; how do you feel to-day, sir?" but behind the greeting was the manner and tormenting attitude of one who would say: "Well, your nerve is still holding out, and we've got to admire you for it; but you know that we know you're guilty."

These visits, alarming and sinister, even though sugarcoated, finally "got" to Richeson. His nerve, which had oozed away by almost unappreciable degrees, completely forsook him early one Wednesday morning in November, when he attempted to commit suicide. Many versions have been advanced in explanation of this desperate wound he inflicted upon his person in the darkness of his cell. Some went so far as to see in it obedience to the biblical command to "pluck out the offending eye." What really happened was that the haunted Richeson, his constant fear being rapidly multiplied by the knowledge that the prosecution was doing its utmost to fight delay in trial, sprang from his cot early one morning and with the insufficient weapon of tin at his command, tried to open a vein which would bleed him to death. Again fear seized him when he heard the splash of warm blood trickling upon the stone floor of his cell, and he shrieked in terror for help. Richeson's act recalled the powerful words used by Daniel Webster in the noted case of the murder of Captain White, which was tried in the same town of Boston in April, 1830. "There is no refuge from confession," thundered Webster, "but suicide, and suicide is confession."

Avis Linnell and Her Home in Hyannis



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Richeson's act was a blighting disappointment to the attorney who had set about with so much confidence in his innocence to build up a defense which would result in acquittal. Or the other hand the prosecution felt as if its most convincing argument had been uttered.

Still resisting all efforts of the defense to obtain a postponement of the trial date, the prosecution hastened its plans with such celerity that a week before the trial was to open, Richeson's defiance utterly gone and his nerve shattered, staggered the country by his voluntary confession that he was guilty of the crime charged against him.

ROYAL ARCANUM

Members of Supreme Council Attend Reception at Museum.

Members of the Supreme Council, Royal Arcanum, now in session at the Jefferson Hotel, yesterday morning paid a visit to John Marshall High School and the home of Chief Justice John Marshall, and last night were the guests of the Valentine Museum, where they were entertained at a reception. At 10 o'clock the convention got down to regular work, and held two sessions during the day. The time for the most part, was taken up with receiving and acting upon reports of committees.

The last social entertainment of the convention will take place to-night at 8:15 o'clock, when the annual dance will be held in the Jefferson Hotel auditorium. This will be preceded by Polk Miller and his quartet.

ARRESTED FOR AN ASSAULT COMMITTED TWO MONTHS AGO

John Lockett, colored, was arrested yesterday by Detective-Sergeant Bailey for an assault upon John Cosmon, a Greek, of 1718 East Main Street, committed more than two months ago.

The negro is alleged to have struck Cosmon a terrific blow over the chest, from which he has never recovered. The blow is said to have caused Cosmon to suffer serious internal trouble, and as a result he has been under the care of a physician.

Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

The Richmond assembly of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew held its quarterly meeting last night in the lecture-room of Grace Episcopal Church. Rev. F. B. Warren and J. Shreve Durham were the speakers. The latter explained the details of the home visitation campaign soon to be undertaken by all the denominations.

Neither Committee Meets.

The meeting of the Special Committee on Investigation of the Public Schools, scheduled for last night, was postponed at the request of several members, who are also members of the Committee on Relief of the

Poor. The latter was scheduled for an important meeting at the City Home to award a number of supply contracts, but failed of a quorum.

PRIVATE LOSES LIFE.

Jumps Into Water When Dared by Companions and Is Drowned.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.] Hampton, Va., May 20.—Parker V. Casson, twenty-seven years old, a private in the Fifty-Eighth Company, Heavy Coast Artillery, at Fort Monroe, jumped from the dock of a barge into Hampton Roads this afternoon and was drowned. He was unable to swim, and when dared to jump into the water by other swimmers, he took the leap, and never again appeared on the surface of the water. Casson was attached to the mine planting crew. He enlisted in the army four years ago from Charlottesville. The body has not yet been recovered.

Temple Gets Decision.

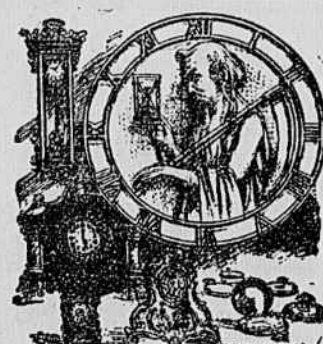
Memphis, Tenn., May 20.—Ray Temple, of Milwaukee, was awarded the decision over Joe Mandot, of New Orleans, at the end of an eight-round bout here to-night.

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